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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which beginning teachers who are career changers hold proactive beliefs about teaching. The beliefs of six career-changers (four males and two females, aged 25 to 45 years) were examined by means of in-depth interviews concerning their academic histories, previous careers, teacher preparation experiences, and general philosophy about school improvement. Cross-analysis of the qualitative data resulted in a Conceptual Framework toward Change. This framework suggests that career changers may be proactive in their approaches to teaching to the extent that they are capable of: (1) identifying with the new role of teacher; (2) having an investigatory focus on their work in the classroom; and (3) resolving developmental issues in their personal lives. (Contains 1 figure and 25 references.) (Author/SLD)

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Developing a Conceptual Framework toward Change:

A Cross-Case Analysis of Six Career Changers

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Paper presented at the annual conference of the Eastern Educational Research Association, Cambridge, Massachusetts, February, 1996

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which beginning teachers who are career changers hold proactive beliefs about teaching. The beliefs of six career changers were examined by means of in-depth interviews concerning their academic histories, previous careers, teacher preparation experiences, and general philosophy about school improvement. Cross-analysis of the qualitative data resulted in a Conceptual Framework toward Change. This framework suggests that career changers may be proactive in their approach to teaching to the extent they are capable of (1) identifying with the new role of teacher; (2) having an investigatory focus on their work in the classroom; and (3) resolving developmental issues in their personal lives.

Developing a Conceptual Framework toward Change

A Cross-Case Analysis of Six Career Changers

This study examined whether or not career changers are willing to participate in, or even may be suited to, the demands of a proactive approach to teaching embodied by a converging series of modern ideas for reform (see e.g., Fullan, 1982; Goodland, 1984, 1990; Sarason, 1971). It sought to contribute to a new, emerging body of research on the men and women who are entering teacher education programs after having established other careers, i.e., "non-traditional" teacher education students (Zumwalt, 1991). Because current trends in education reform emphasize the proactive and reflective decision-making aspects of teaching, i.e., the ability to examine critically the assumptions that schools make about what can count as acceptable goals and methods, problems and solutions (Posner, 1989), beginning teachers may be caught in a wave of new expectations that demand the examination of experiences and motives for teaching more than has traditionally been the case (Fuller, Parsons, & Watkins, 1974).

Theoretical Perspective

Fullan (1982) wrote that learning how to implement educational change requires skills and experiences that must, to a significant extent,

be learned on the job. This hypothesis suggests that beginning teachers will be weak change agents. Zeichner (1983) and Goodman (1987), however, both demonstrated that some beginning teachers have potential to influence changes in education, especially if they employ reflective practices and receive appropriate professional support within the first years of teaching. Goodman identified these teachers as "proactive" because they made substantive decisions that altered traditional practices found in schools (1987, p. 208). Proactive teachers could effect change, for example, because they held broadened conceptions of teaching, initiated change without alienating school authorities, and formed support networks with other progressive individuals within the school setting (Goodman, 1986).

Although within recent years there has been some research that explores the characteristics of non-traditional teacher education students in the areas of gender differences, teacher development, and pedagogical constructs (Freidus, 1992; Powell & Birrell, 1992; Powell & Riner, 1992), little is yet known about whether or not career changers hold proactive beliefs about teaching. Some of the literature on beginning teachers, however, does support the idea that career changers may have

special qualities that set them apart from typical, beginning teacher recruits.

For example, Lortie (1975) categorized career changers as "counteridentifiers" who might "innovate more and show greater readiness to accept change in school organization" than would typical recruits (p. 230). Goodlad (1990) found that the strong drive to become teachers was particularly obvious in non-traditional teacher education students. This group had a strong desire to begin teaching as soon as possible and chose teacher education institutions on the basis of convenience, having a best shot at local teaching positions.

Freidus & Krasnow (1991) examined the perceptions about teaching held by career changers at the time of their career transitions. As they entered into their student teaching internships, these career changers not only wanted to serve society as teachers, but they also saw themselves as "agents of social change" who could "repay" society by making the world a better place. At the conclusion of their teacher preparation, however, their views became more realistic concerning the extent to which they could actually "make a difference in the lives of children and, ultimately, the state of the world " (Freidus & Krasnow, 1991). They realized early in their teaching experience that, as was the case for most of their former

professions, teaching is socially and politically contextualized. This understanding and identification of the teaching context gave them a more mature and realistic perspective from which to proceed in their work (Freidus & Krasnow, 1991).

Drawing from the literature, the investigator understood that (1) some beginning teachers hold proactive beliefs about teaching and are willing to act upon those beliefs; and (2) some career changers hold a mature understanding of the contexts of schools not expected in most beginning teachers. With this in mind, the investigator conducted a preliminary study concerning the beliefs of three career changers who were deemed by their mentors to be outstanding beginning teachers (Murphy, 1991). The participants (two females and one male, ages 33 to 38) had switched to teaching from international banking, management, and finance. All had served as full-time substitute teachers in public schools as part of a graduate internship program in the metropolitan New York City area. The investigator, who worked in the teacher preparation program as an adjunct professor and clinical supervisor, had interacted with the three participants during their graduate experience.

Through indepth interviews, the investigator examined the participants' academic and career histories, self-perceptions as students

and professionals, and beliefs about teaching practices. Audiotapes of the interviews were transcribed and qualitative methods were used to analyze the transcripts (Merriam, 1988).

Three categories of developmental characteristics of proactive career changers emerged from the cross-case analysis: involvement, improvement, and integration. These broad categories provided the basis for the Conceptual Framework toward Change which is the focus of this paper.

First, the participants were involved in the school change process because they (1) fostered relationships with students, teachers, principals, and parents; (2) held a work ethic in which teaching was found to be "hard work," but was both expected and accepted due to the seriousness of their commitment; and (3) were at ease within the cultures of their schools, as they moved in and out of situations that arose in classrooms, teachers' lounges, and front offices. Next, these career changers expressed concerns about cognitive improvement in themselves and in their students. They struggled to understand the ongoing connections between teaching and learning, theory and practice. Finally, the participants felt they had attained psychological integration of who they were, what they believed, and what they were doing in their

life's work. As they approached the end of early adulthood, they had aligned their personal beliefs by working in a profession that, for the most part, allowed them freedom to make changes. With teaching approaches that ranged from conventional to experimental, all of the subjects conveyed a potential for being change agents in education.

The "best match" for having a proactive approach was the female participant called Adrienne. She reported a set of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors about her teaching that seemed consistent with the definition of proactive teaching (Goodman, 1986), and her case best typified the categories of involvement, improvement, and integration. Key characteristics were (1) a unique academic and biographical history; (2) a history of prosocial involvement; (3) commitment to the idea that teaching and learning are integrated activities; (4) experience in making substantive decisions about curriculum; (5) a mature understanding of the political and social context of her school; (6) the ability to adapt to different roles within the culture of the school when needed, such as that of secretary, administrator, coordinator, counselor, and friend; and (7) the ability to create networks among faculty, administrators, parents, and students to promote change in her school.

Method

For the present study, the investigator wanted to build upon what she had learned about career changers in the preliminary study by (1) expanding the number of cases for cross-analysis; (2) ensuring some degree of randomization in the selection of the participants for the cases; and (3) ensuring some difference in the range of beliefs held by the participants. Thus, six participants were chosen at random from a large sample of 58 beginning teachers who identified themselves as career changers. The large sample was drawn from students enrolled in graduate level teacher certification programs in the metropolitan New York City area during Spring 1992. These programs included a midcareer mathematics teaching program, a state-funded program to certify minority teachers, and the previously mentioned substitute teacher internship program.

In order to stratify the large sample for selection of the cases, the Teacher Belief Inventory (Posner, 1989) was used. The TBI is a 57-item questionnaire adapted from a shorter instrument developed by Zeichner and Tabachnik (1984) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. It is an educational tool that consists of assertion statements placed on a scale of 1 to 4 ("Strongly Disagree" to "Agree") in the following categories: (1)

control, (2) teacher's role, (3) diversity, (4) learning, (5) knowledge, (6) school and society. The results of the quantitative analyses of the TBI administration, which go beyond the scope of this paper, can be found in the full report of the study (Neapolitan, 1994).

From the sample of 58 career changers, two participants (n=6) were chosen at random from each third of the TBI total score distribution. This type of sampling assumed some degree of difference in the reported beliefs of the six participants, ranging from a conventional orientation (low scores) to a proactive orientation (high scores).

The investigator interviewed the six participants (4 males and 2 females, ages 25 to 45 years) concerning their academic histories, previous careers, teacher preparation experiences, and general philosophy about school improvement. An interview schedule of 25 open-ended questions, piloted in the preliminary study, was used. Transcripts of the interviews were coded by the investigator, using the six categories from the TBI. In this way, the investigator attempted to "bridge" the categories of the TBI with the qualitative data from the interviews. The transcripts were then reviewed and amended by six peer debriefers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). An agreement rate of 80% was determined between the coding of the investigator and that of the peer debriefers. Cross-analysis of the six

cases resulted in the Conceptual Framework toward Change (see Figure 1).

Insert Figure 1 about here

Developing the Conceptual Framework toward Change

The remainder of this paper will present (1) a brief description of the Conceptual Framework toward Change and how it built upon the categories found in the preliminary study ; (2) a comparison of the key aspects of the six cases and how they relate to the conceptual framework; (3) a closer look at the case of Jonathan, who seemed to be the "best match" for having a proactive approach to teaching; and (4) recommendations for the recruitment, preparation, and retention of proactive career changers.

It should be noted that the Conceptual Framework toward Change is only a device to help depict the results of "work in progress," and it should not be considered a full-blown conceptual model. Rather, it is an attempt to organize the complexity of developmental characteristics that appear connected to what has been gleaned from research and good practice about the beliefs and dispositions of teachers who are inclined to improve classroom teaching. The conceptual framework presents three categories

of adult growth and development that seem important for having a proactive approach to teaching: identification with the role of teacher, investigation about teaching and learning, and resolution of lifespan issues.

Identification. Because there was a preponderance of talk in the interviews about the teacher's role, the original "involvement" category was renamed "identification with the role of teacher." "Collegiality with other teachers" replaced the original subcategory of "relationships" because it more clearly defined the type of relationship that is linked to school improvement. Two subcategories emerged that seemed related to identification with the role of the teacher and the category of control: "empathy with students" and "willingness to implement teaching/learning." These subcategories seem to suggest an emotional component for the framework, as well as a social one. In summary, the characteristics of collegiality, empathy, and willingness to teach suggest a socioemotional dimension toward change.

Investigation. Next, the original category of "improvement" was changed to "investigation." Investigation more keenly suggests the ongoing pursuit of knowledge in light of what is best for serving the particular needs of clients. The subcategory of "teaching-learning

connection" reflected a particular way in which proactive teachers choose to serve their clients. This subcategory arose from the participants' awareness for connecting formal learning with informal learning. The subcategory "needs of the learner" was informed by the emphasis on diversity made by the participants, all of whom had undergone teacher preparation experiences in urban settings. In summary, the focus on investigation of the teaching-learning connection and emphasis on the needs of the learner suggested a cognitive dimension toward change.

Resolution. In the preliminary study, the category of "integration" of one's beliefs seemed to fit the participants' developmental stage. The three participants in the preliminary study ranged in ages from 32 to 38 and had spent ten years or more working in other fields. For them, entering teaching seemed to integrate some of their past skills and abilities with an unfulfilled desire to become a teacher. Moreover, they were experiencing the "deadline decade" of ages 30 to 40 (Goldhaber, 1986), and they expressed a willingness to make the pieces of their lives "fit" into their new identities as teachers.

In the present study, however, five of the interviewees were just approaching age 30. This group was more representative of the early career changers found in teacher education programs, rather than the

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later, more work-experienced or retired group (Merseth, 1994). For the most part, these early career changers seemed concerned with resolving the developmental issues of early adulthood, such as marriage, parenting, and work (Goldhaber, 1986). In order to more accurately depict the lifespan concerns of this group, the third framework category was changed to "resolution," with the new subcategories of "reality testing," "compromise," and "forgiveness." By making the decision to enter teaching, these particular career changers tested, to varying degrees, what they believed about themselves through new relationships, experiences, and challenges. For them, the decision to remain in teaching as caring and actively involved professionals would require the ability to compromise in order to move ahead and the ability to forgive in order to let go of the past. In summary, the resolution of lifespan issues suggests a psychological dimension (i.e., a combination of the socioemotional and cognitive dimensions) toward change.

Cross-Analysis of the Cases: Similarities and Differences

The High Scorers: Hillary and Sylvia. Hillary and Sylvia (not their real names) were drawn from the portion of the large sample whose beliefs suggested a proactive orientation toward teaching. Yet, according to the analysis of their interviews, Hillary and Sylvia may not have been

as proactive in their beliefs as their scores suggested. Hillary, a former recruiter for an executive search company, seemed quite accepting of the present conditions that surround teaching. Her idea of being proactive was more of a public act rather than an act of mutual trust between her and her elementary school students. On the other hand, Sylvia, a former advertising account supervisor, seemed concerned with the individual needs of her special education learners. Her commitment to teaching over time, however, seemed questionable. In her interview, Sylvia focused more on her own personal quest for fulfillment than on promoting change in classrooms. Since both Hillary and Sylvia graduated from a teacher preparation institution known for its progressive approach to education, it is possible their reported beliefs reflected, to some degree, what they had learned in their coursework.

Although Hillary and Sylvia came from different socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds, both seemed to be at important crossroads in their lives. In some ways, both had been "drifting" for several years after college without a career path in mind. At age 29, Hillary had recently married as she approached the deadline decade. Hillary seemed to be in conflict over whether or not to make teaching her career because she wanted to start a family soon. Faced with the decision of compromising

parenthood over a teaching career, Hillary's responses seemed to emanate from a sense of detachment about teaching rather than from a connection to teaching through her experience. She talked about teaching as an outsider rather than as one who identified with a new role.

Sylvia, on the other hand, seemed committed to teaching, if only temporarily, as a result of her life's experience with her younger brother who was learning disabled. At age 25, her decision to enter teaching had stemmed from her concerns about money, self-interests, and independence as a single minority female. In Hillary's case, however, the decision to enter teaching seemed to arise from the need to have a career "to fall back on" when not engaged in the role of wife and mother.

Overall, Hillary's interview was characterized by a teacher-centered orientation that focused on her own participation in teaching/learning rather than on her students' participation. She reported relationships with her students that were social rather than teacher-learner connected. Moreover, she perceived herself as being a highly capable teacher, yet in her interview she did not report instances where she had implemented specific strategies or techniques to facilitate learning.

Sylvia's interview, on the other hand, was characterized by an orientation toward the learner as an individual. Her personal history

reflected her overcoming barriers to fulfill her own learning needs, especially as they related to the quality of her life as a single woman. Sylvia seemed devoted to her cultural heritage as a Latina and to the values instilled in her by her family. She approached her teaching, therefore, with the same strong feelings she had about her family. In her teaching, she focused on the individual needs of the learners by manipulating the physical environment of the classroom, communicating regularly with the learners' parents, and investigating the best ways to help each individual child.

The Moderate Scorers: Kurt and Jonathan. Kurt and Jonathan (not their real names) were drawn from those participants whose reported beliefs suggested a moderate orientation toward teaching, and they had several characteristics in common. Both had participated in a substitute teaching internship program and had investigated their prospects for entering teaching by consulting with professional educators and career counselors. They were attracted to the internship program because it would afford them full-time experience as staff members in a school for one year. As interns, both Kurt and Jonathan had faced some of the realities of daily life in large high schools. For example, trying to maintain classroom discipline with unfamiliar students and trying to

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implement someone else's lesson plans. Their experiences may have mediated, in some ways, their beliefs about teaching, resulting in beliefs that seemed to be more "tempered" by reality than those of Hillary and Sylvia, who had brief and highly selective preservice experiences.

Both Kurt and Jonathan worked previously in the area of marketing. Their initiation and socialization into the adult world of work was characterized by their group-membership with other salespeople and being mentored managers and supervisors. Both men reported experiencing considerable autonomy in their previous work and considerable time "in the field" with a range of clients. Moreover, both men reported how they created strategies for improving the quality of their delivery of services to their clients. Their ability to "sell" people an idea or product appeared to have made a positive contribution to their teaching approaches, although this ability has been viewed as a deterrent in some teaching situations (Powell & Birrell, 1992).

Despite their similarities, however, Kurt and Jonathan seemed to differ from each other in certain ways. Kurt's situation was similar to Hillary's in that he, too, was approaching age 30. He was not completely sure of his next steps for a career. He seemed to have entered teaching because his "personality," according to some vocational tests and

consultation with others, was suited for it. He also seemed to be attracted to teaching because the roles of coach and computer specialist were compelling features of the job for him.

Jonathan, on the other hand, was 25 years old and had been married a short time. He was at a point in his life where both work and personal relationships had merged. Although he felt successful at his previous work in marketing, he had carried with him the idea of becoming a teacher for a long time. Over the years, he had experienced positive relationships with children, both as a friend (a Big Brother) and as an instructor (swimming coach).

Both Kurt and Jonathan reported concerns about the needs of their respective learners. In Kurt's case, the focus took the shape of an entrepreneurial before-school breakfast program. By initiating this idea for improvement, he bargained and "made deals" with students, faculty, and the administration. Since Kurt was completing his internship at his old high school, he had a thorough understanding of the social and political contexts of the school. This may have contributed to his confidence and ease in promoting change. Ultimately, however, Kurt felt tnat if classroom teaching was not completely satisfying to him, he would seek credentials for school administration.

Jonathan, on the other hand, had spent more than a year working in an urban high school that was quite different from the high school he had attended. While growing up in an affluent, upperclass community, Jonathan found learning to be a positive and compelling experience that helped build his personal identity and self-esteem. When he was negatively labeled a "jock" in college, however, he felt the sting of bias for the first time. Being athletic, as well as intelligent, was no longer an asset. Therefore, he worked hard to "prove himself" by earning good grades and becoming politically active both in the college and surrounding community.

Since Jonathan chose to include this particular information about his own challenge as a student, the investigator wondered if this kind of salient experience could have contributed to his beliefs about his students' ability to learn? Jonathan's history was quite different from those of his urban, minority students, yet he seemed focused on their capacity to learn. He was amazed that society, in many ways, had given up on these students before they even had a chance to prove their potential.

Motivated by wanting to make a difference for these students, Jonathan made some changes in the established English curriculum by developing an experimental English course called, "Wide World of Sports."

While teaching this course, he self-evaluated and adapted his teaching methods to meet the students at a level where they would be successful, yet challenged. He continuously engaged students in their own learning by using journal writing, cooperative work groups, and other reifective teaching practices he had learned in a course on whole language. Furthermore, his notion of interactive teaching and learning had been shaped by a course on curriculum design he had taken as an elective.

Like Kurt, Jonathan identified with the role of the teacher. He expressed a sense of collegiality with his co-workers and had respect for his supervisors. Jonathan also contributed to the life of his school by volunteering as an advisor in the Peer Outreach Program. Unlike Kurt, however, Jonathan's intentions to continue teaching in the classroom seemed more resolute.

The Low Scorers: Greg and Ben. The interviews of both Greg and Ben (not their real names) seemed to reflect a conventional orientation toward teaching. Ben, age 45 and a former artist and photographer, held ideas about teaching that seemed dependent upon popular and naive beliefs. Unlike the other participants, Ben was more typical of what is generally considered a true "career changer," i.e., a person in midlife who is already accomplished in another field. Yet, Ben seemed to be the least prepared to

teach. He was working in the inner-city neighborhood of his youth as a long-term substitute in an elementary school computer class via a temporary teaching certificate. Although he had taken advantage of a state-funded grant that subsidized 12 credits of graduate study toward certification for minority teachers, he had not yet enrolled in a teacher preparation program. For this reason, he had not received academic and field supports typically afforded beginning teachers enrolled in teacher preparation programs. Since he was not a regularly appointed teacher, he had not received standard supervision from the school system either.

Greg, on the other hand, was age 26 and a former marketing employee. Like Kurt and Jonathan, he had also participated in the internship program. Unlike his classmates, though, Greg seemed overwhelmed by the myriad social forces that impinge upon teaching and learning. He seemed to have a conventional orientation toward teaching but appeared less constrained in his comprehension of the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of education than Ben did. Although he did not seem to possess the personal confidence and social maturity of Kurt and Jonathan, Greg did convey a genuine concern for his students. His focus, however, was more on issues outside the classroom than within it. It was not surprising, then, that Greg concluded he might be happier in

some other teaching-related kind of work, perhaps as a guidance counselor.

Unlike Ben, Greg seemed to possess a broader understanding of the role of the teacher and, like Kurt and Jonathan, was more understanding of teachers who appeared "burnt out" or incompetent. For Ben, there seemed to be no connection between his experience as a teacher and what he had learned from the experience of other teachers whom he encountered. Thus, the sense of collegiality and connectedness that might keep some beginning teachers working longer in classrooms seemed absent from Ben's experience.

Although Greg seemed tentative about his future plans as a teacher, he gave the impression he might "stick it out" for awhile as he tried to improve his classroom management and instruction. Ben, on the other hand, seemed the least likely of any of the cases to remain in teaching. Although he reported having made some improvements in his teaching, these improvements were measured by him in terms of his mastery of information, his moving quickly through the steps in the teacher's manual, and his keeping the children quiet. Given his personal beliefs about teaching and learning, inadequate professional preparation for classroom teaching, and the particular demands of his inner-city teaching

assignment, it seemed doubtful that Ben would remain in his teaching assignment for very long.

Jonathan: The "Best Match" for Change. Of the six cases examined in this study, Jonathan's was the best match with the Conceptual Framework toward Change. In the opinion of the investigator and the peer debriefers, as well, the quality of Jonathan's responses suggested a kind of confidence, reflection, and "lack of arrogance" which superseded socially acceptable or politically correct answers. Jonathan's self-report seemed propelled by an informed and realistic concern for the needs of learners.

As in the case of Adrienne in the preliminary study, Jonathan seemed to be a critical and creative thinker with a strong academic background. He had a history of prosocial involvement and understood the political and social context of his school. Like Adrienne, Jonathan, too, showed commitment to the idea that teaching and learning are integrated activities; and he had a capacity for making substantitve decisions about curriculum.

Since the beginning teacher's experience is a complex interplay between the beginning teacher's self-discovery (Featherstone, 1993) and the conditions of the workplace, it should be noted that Jonathan had been supported in his teacher induction experience in two important ways.

First, he had benefitted from an extended field experience. His internship had afforded him valuable time and experience in which to reconfigure his thinking about teaching, students, and schools (Powell & Birrell, 1992). Second, he had worked in a school district where teachers and administrators supported new teachers with built-in mechanisms for helping them, including beginning teacher orientation and mentoring (Goodman, 1987). Thus, it appears that the interplay between career changers' past experiences, personal characteristics, and orientation toward teaching and the quality of their early teaching experiences may have some implications for being proactive.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Although this study relied primarily on the self-reports of the participants and was limited by its sampling methods and use of a non-standardized questionnaire, the results suggested that some career changers may be proactive in their approach to teaching, but it "depends." It depends on the extent to which career changers are (1) capable of identifying with the new role of teacher; (2) have an investigatory focus on their work in the classroom; and (3) are capable of resolving developmental issues in their personal lives. The results also suggested ways for the recruitment, preparation, and retention of career changers

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who would be better equipped to meet the demands of a proactive approach to teaching.

Early Counseling. First, career changers might profit from opportunities to be counseled more carefully by education professionals about their decision to enter teaching. Use of appropriate pencil and paper instruments, including the Meyers-Brigg Type Indicator, can be helpful for screening applicants. Introductory courses and seminars on teaching can provide opportunities for career changers to receive support from other career changers, obtain comprehensive information about teaching as a new career, and examine their motives for teaching. Thus, by "giving pause" to their entrance into teaching, career changers can become more aware of the extent of their personal commitment and resources for spending time, energy, and money that are often the "hidden costs" of entering the profession at midcareer.

Extended Field Experience. Next, career changers can seek formal teacher preparation through special school-university programs that combine a formal course of study with an extended field experience which surpasses traditional student teaching. Such programs have arisen from the need to supply school districts with competent substitute teachers and to encourage the intake of new teachers by providing practical

experience and a modest stipend. More recently, the development of field-based teacher education programs as vehicles for education reform, such as the Holmes Group's Professional Development Schools and John Goodlad's centers of pedagogy, have captured the interest of schools of education that are rethinking the way they prepare new teachers for the profession. The benefits of gradual classroom responsibility, experience in different teacher-related activities, and a prolonged period of mentoring by trusted and expert teachers could help increase the development of proactive beliefs in career changers. In addition, this enhanced preparation could increase the career changer's chances of remaining in teaching.

Professionalization of Teaching. Finally, the likelihood of retaining career changers, as well as first career teachers, who have been thoughtfully recruited and adequately prepared to teach will be increased by improving some of the conditions that affect teaching in schools today. Although the vast issues of school improvement go well beyond the scope of this study, some suggestions that stem from school improvement initiatives seem relevant here, especially those concerning the professionalization of teaching. These initiatives include improved staff development, opportunities to develop shared-decision making skills, built

in time for curriculum planning and sharing with colleagues, increased interactions with parents and other community members, taking on differentiated roles within the school organization, improved methods of teacher assessment and credentialing, and finally, career ladder incentives, such as promotions and salary increases.

Thus, by making changes to improve the recruitment, preparation, and retention of all beginning teachers--career changers and first career teachers alike--movement toward professionalization in teaching can be achieved (Darling-Hammond & Goodwin, 1993).

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Figure 1

Conceptual Framework toward Change